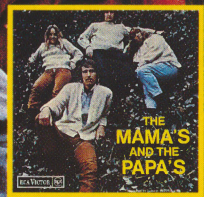
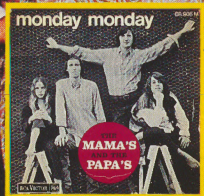
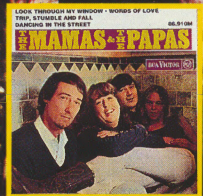


THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS

THE EP COLLECTION





1. CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'
2. STRAIGHT SHOOTER
3. SOMEBODY GROOVY
4. GOT A FEELING
5. MONDAY MONDAY
6. HEY GIRL
7. THE IN CROWD
8. YOU BABY
9. I SAW HER AGAIN LAST NIGHT
10. EVEN IF I COULD
11. GO WHERE YOU WANNA GO
12. I CALL YOUR NAME
13. LOOK THROUGH MY WINDOW
14. WORDS OF LOVE
15. TRIP, STUMBLE AND FALL
16. DANCING IN THE STREET
17. DEDICATED TO THE ONE I LOVE
18. I CAN'T WAIT
19. FREE ADVICE
20. THAT KIND OF GIRL

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"Groups in beards, boots and funny hats were still new in 1966, but the Mamas and the Papas were a sensation, musically and visually." -Lillian Roxon.

Some 25 years later it is too easy to underestimate how striking this superb group was. The original line-up stayed together for two years, barring a brief reformation, and the enclosed compilation is drawn from the EPs issued during this short, but prolific, period.

Although hailed as a new discovery, the Mamas and the Papas were rooted in America's folksong circuit. Their principal songwriter, John Phillips, had previously led the Journeymen, a popular, clean-cut three-piece, based on the Kingston Trio. The group completed three albums between 1961 and 1963, but broke up when the rise of the Beatles rendered their music out-of-date. Phillips then revamped the act, calling it the New Journeymen, although this was something of a mis-nomer as the line-up now included his wife, Michelle Gilliam.

The Big Three - John Hendricks, Tim Rose and Naomi 'Cass' Elliot - were active at the same time. Although initially based in Chicago, they gravitated towards Greenwich Village, but despite two promising albums, were unable to make a commercial impression. When Rose left for a solo career in 1964, Cass and John joined forces with Denny Doherty and Zalman Yanovsky, previously of Canadian act the Halifax Three. The new act was dubbed the Mugwumps, and although their recordings would not be issued until the participants found fame elsewhere, the quartet's mixture of folk, R&B and pop anticipated the jug band style popularised by the Lovin' Spoonful, of whom Zally became a founder member.

The Mugwumps were disbanded when Doherty joined John and Michelle in the New Journeymen. The trio was entirely dissatisfied with folk and hatched plans to pursue a more electric sound. They decamped to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands and eventually settled in a beachfront boarding house in a street named Creeque Alley. Cass Elliot followed them there, but the group initially resisted her repeated requests to join them, arguing that her range wasn't high enough for Phillips' new-styled compositions. However, a lead pipe struck Cass on the head during a bout of interior redecorating and, having recovered from the resultant concussion, she discovered her voice had changed.

Michelle, John and Denny returned to New York in 1965, while Cass headed for Los Angeles. Her colleagues quickly surmised that their future also lay in California and they travelled across the country in a Cadillac, courtesy of car delivery firm U-Drive It. The trio joined Cass upon their arrival, and she then became an official member of their as-yet un-named troupe. At that time Los Angeles was a folk-rock Mecca; the Byrds, Sonny and Cher and the Turtles were all Top 10 acts, while P.F. Sloan and Barry McGuire spearheaded a concurrent protest pop. McGuire, a veteran of the New Christy Minstrels, knew Phillips from the Journeymen era. He had already scored a smash hit with 'Eve Of Destruction' and was in the process of cutting a second album when he met the quartet. McGuire invited them to a recording

session, during which it was suggested that he try one of John's songs, 'California Dreamin''. It was duly completed with the composer's group adding backing harmonies, but the singer's gruff intonation was not ideal for the song's somewhat delicate tune. Another master was prepared with Denny's voice on lead, and the quartet was rewarded with a recording deal. They still required a name, and having flirted with 'the Magic Circle', became the Mamas and the Papas from a term used by motorcycle gang Hells Angels.

The sumptuous 'California Dreamin'' deservedly became an international best-seller, and was a lynchpin release in American folk rock, alongside the Byrds' 'Mr. Tambourine Man' and the Lovin' Spoonful's 'Do You Believe In Magic?'. The Mamas and the Papas' voices were instantly recognisable, while Phillips' grasp of melody was unerring. Most of his work was autobiographical which, given his stormy marriage with Michelle, added a sense of melancholia to this work. The group's second single, 'Monday Monday', topped the US chart and reached number 3 in Britain, and this world-wide acclaim led to the release of the EPs chronicled herein.

'California Dreamin'', not unnaturally, headed the first set, which was completed by the single's B-side, 'Somebody Groovy', and 'Straight Shooter' and 'Got A Feelin'', two cuts from the group's debut LP, 'If You Can Believe Your Eyes And Ears'. The latter track, deemed by many one of the finest the group recorded, was also the flip to 'Monday Monday'. Its EP contained two more contributions from that first album. 'Hey Girl' and 'The 'In' Crowd', and a much newer master, 'Trip, Stumble and Fall', which later appeared on "Cass, John, Michelle, Denny". 'The 'In' Crowd' had been, previously cut by Dobie Gray as a pop/soul anthem. Although the Mamas and the Papas were renowned for Phillips' original compositions, they often recorded personal favourites, adapting them to suit their own inimitable style. In this case the song had particular relevance; the group was indeed "in with the 'in' crowd", musically and socially.

It was thus no surprise that Mamas and the Papas turned to Motown favourites, although their reading of 'Dancing In The Street' was not quite the call-to-arms of Martha Reeves and the Vandellas. It did, however, have a personal significance. Michelle had been fired from the line-up in 1966, with her place taken by Jan and Dean associate Jill Gibson. Within a month John had invited his wife back and 'Dancing In The Street' was recorded on the evening of her return.

The group also revived the Shirelles' 'Dedicated To The One I Love', and this haunting interpretation deservedly sold over 1 million copies, reaching number 2 in both the US and UK. It was not a straight copy, Phillips emphasised the song's gospel orientations and added several minor chords in an effort to accentuate the lyrics' emotional pull. Both of these recordings also appeared on an EP, alongside 'Free Advice', the flip of 'Dedicated', and 'I Can't Wait' from "Cass, John, etc."

The Mamas and the Papas had, however, enjoyed success between 'Monday Monday' and 'Dedicated'.

The bouyant 'I Saw Her Again' was a transatlantic hit and although 'Look Through My Window' fared less well commercially, it remains one of their finest releases. They were both featured on attendant EPs, in which other material, less well-known, perhaps, in the group's canon, was featured. 'That Kind Of Girl', 'Even If I Could' and 'Words of Love' were all drawn from the group's stellar second album, while its predecessor had contained 'I Call Your Name', 'You Baby' and 'Go Where You Wanna Go'. The last of these was initially prepared as the quartet's debut single, and several promotional copies were pressed up. Its release was understandably cancelled when 'California Dreamin'" was completed but it remains a strong early-period performance. The inclusion of the Beatles' 'I Call Your Name' was a tribute to the group which had changed Phillips' musical perception while 'You Baby', written by the Sloan/Barri team, was an acknowledgement of the folk/rock genre he now embraced. This skilful blend of old and new was one of facets making the Mamas and the Papas so attractive.

By 1967, however, the group's bohemian image had become commonplace. Although Phillips had been a leading board member of the Monterey Pop Festival, this showcase for 'underground' rock somehow consigned the Mamas and the Papas to the past, overtaken by Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and the Who, as well as a succession of new San Franciscan groups. The quartet split up the following year, pulled apart by internal disputes and a feeling that musically they had achieved all they could.

Cass Elliot enjoyed the greatest success, scoring hits with 'Dream A Little Dream Of Me' (1968) and 'It's Getting Better' (1969), before opting for a somewhat show-biz direction during the ensuing decade. Doherty enjoyed a less celebrated solo career, while Phillips completed the critically-lauded album, "The Wolfking Of L.A." (1970). The Mamas and the Papas did reunite for "People Like Us" (1971), but their vocal parts were laid down separately and the project was largely forgettable. The death of Cass Elliot two years later and John Phillips' well-chronicled drug habit signalled an end to the golden era, although the latter emerged completely rehabilitated during the 80s. He and Denny reformed the Mamas and the Papas with John's daughter, Laura, and Spanky McFarlane, formerly of Spanky and Our Gang. Michelle Phillips meanwhile enjoyed a highly-successful acting career.

The regrouped Mamas and the Papas still tour, although Doherty has been replaced by Scott McKenzie, a one-time member of the Journeymen, but a singer forever associated with his 1967 anthem, 'San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear A Flower In Your Hair)', specifically written for him by Papa John. The new line-up has not, as yet, recorded, but continued interest in their career confirms the popularity of the original group's releases. "The EP Collection" showcases the bulk of their best-known hits, as well as offering equally vibrant songs too often left in comparative obscurity. Taken together they indicate the timeless quality of this excellent group.

Brian Hogg

Taken from the following E.P.'s;

Tracks 1-4 from RCA 86902

Tracks 5-8 from RCA 86905

Tracks 9-12 from RCA 86907

Tracks 13-16 from RCA 86910

Tracks 17-20 from RCA 86911

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4. **GOT A FEELING** (Doherty/Phillips) ©1966
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7. **THE IN CROWD** (Page) ©1966
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9. **I SAW HER AGAIN LAST NIGHT** (Phillips/Doherty) ©1966
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